DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 141 348 SP 011 239

TITLE So You Want to Team Teach in a Junior High School.
INSTITUTION Oregon Consolidated Schools, Wis.
PUB DATE [77]
NOTE 13p.; Some parts may be marginally legible due to small type of the original document

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Junior High Schools; *Junior High School Students; *Secondary School Teachers; *Team Teaching

ABSTRACT

This brochure lists the advantages and disadvantages of team teaching in a rural junior high school in Wisconsin. (MM)

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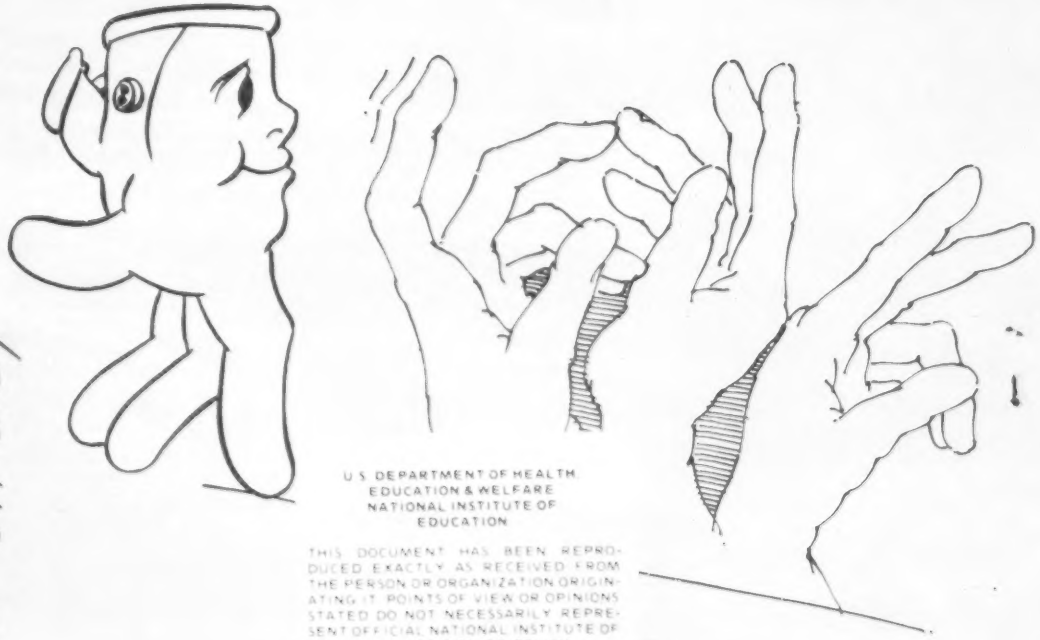
so you want to team teach in a junior high school



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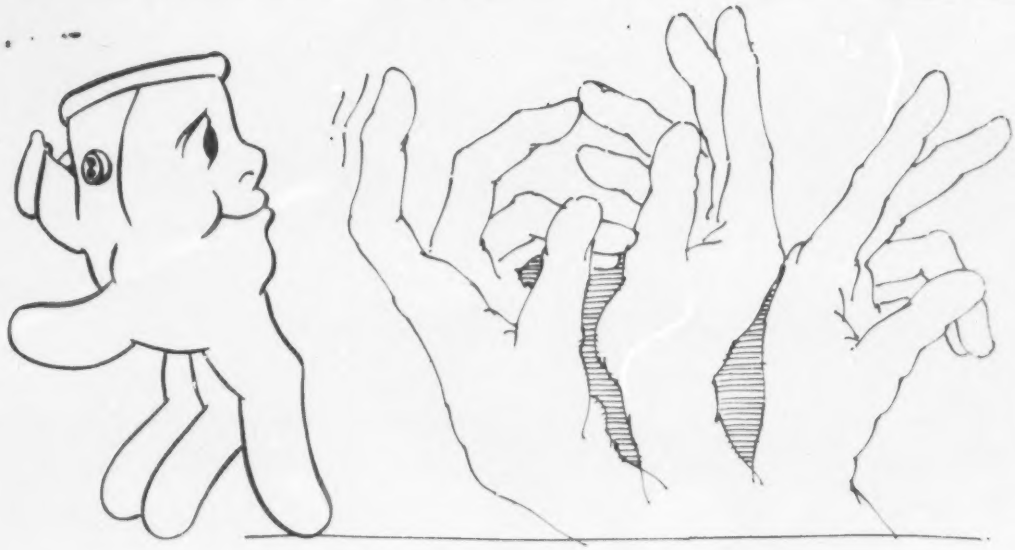


So You Want To Team Teach In A Junior High School

We did.

We wanted more flexability in scheduling and grouping.

We also wanted better opportunities to see our students outside of class.

We agree to integrate our curriculum.

Title III ESEA gave us a chance to try it.

We May Be Small, But We Are Mighty

-450 students, 7th & 8th grade, 29 teachers and support staff

- Small rural town close to Madison, Wisconsin

-Conventional building previously a senior high school

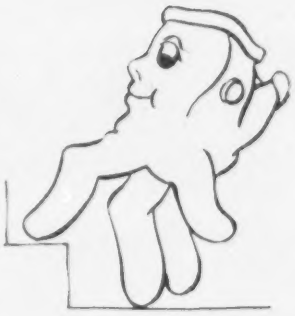
-Student daily schedule: Math, science, social studies, English, physical education, one elective from art, home ec., and industrial arts, two study halls

Band, chorus, Spanish elected during study hall

-Daily teacher schedule (before team teaching): five classes and supervision or six classes, two preparation periods

Watch Out For That First Step!

- Four teams: 110-115 students; four teachers: math, science, social studies, English, one part-time instructional aide
- Block schedules: students- half day with the team teachers
  half day physical education, electives, study hall
  teachers- half day classes
  half day supervision, team planning, preparation, student conferences, extra help sessions, special projects
- Cabinet: four team leaders, two reps from the non-team teachers, principal
- Interdisciplinary curriculum: basic skills, problem-centered units



Later On, You Can Get Into Deeper Water

We formed a team of the teachers of industrial arts, home economics and art.

We also offered six week courses in these areas: one course from each area for every student required in the first semester, then optional course selections for the second semester.

As a framework fpr further curriculum development and program evaluations we established Goals and Student Outcomes.

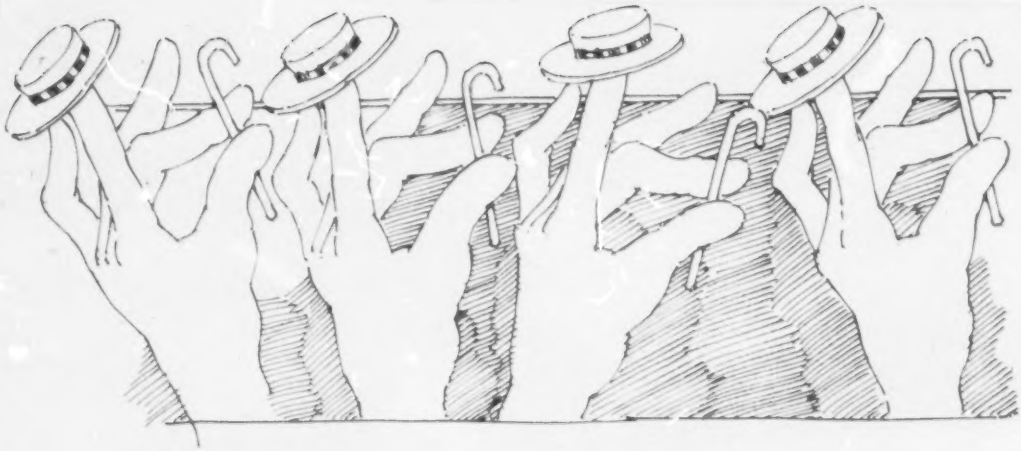
The Building Had To Be Changed A Little

Two rooms were made into a large group presentation room by removing a wall.

The teachers' desks were moved to a team room shared with the other team in the same grade.

Almost everyone shared a classroom.

These changes cramped our resources a bit particularly in science.



Teaming Really Let Us Get Our Act Together

We could support each other regarding discipline.

Some parts of our curriculum were better organized.

We had a way to share ideas.

We cooperated with one another to get things done.

The learning styles and study habits of students became a common concern.

There Are Other Benefits, Too

We are more aware of what our students are getting from their other teachers.

Conferences with individual parents can be held more conveniently.

Communication between the guidance counselor and the teachers of a particular student can be more effective.

Other pupil service people can also be effectively utilized.

There is so much more interaction with adults when you are on a team.

Making Teams Is Not The End Of It Though

Teaming is a process.

Teams are created in order to accomplish something.

It takes time and patience.

Each team takes on its own character.

After a while teams benefit from each other.

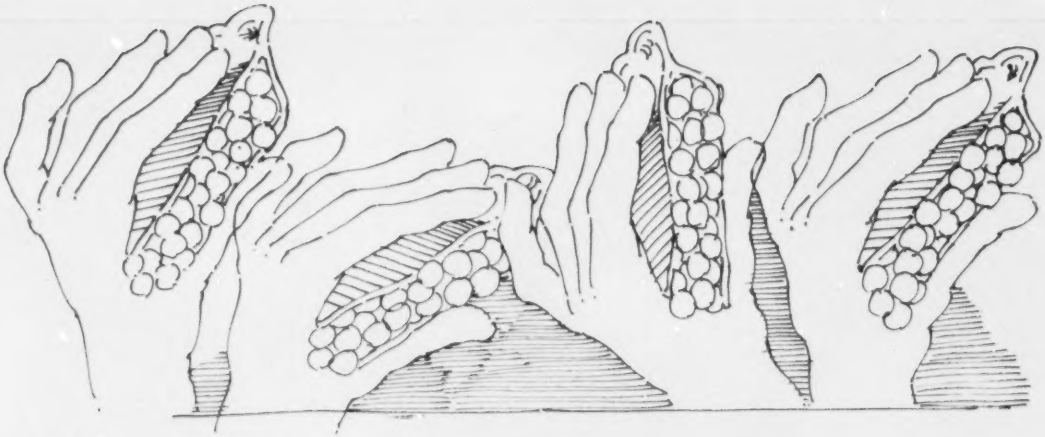
Not Everyone Thinks It Is Such A Hot Idea

Making all these teams has a way of dividing us up into little groups.

Some people work better independently.

Trying all these things put a burden on some of the teachers.

We try to live with it; time makes some things better.



Shared Decision Making Gave Us A Piece Of The Action

We can alter our class groups, modify our class schedules and change our supervision assignments.

We can plan for special events like field trips, speakers and feature length films.

We have a representative attending the Cabinet meetings.

The Cabinet Sounds Like A Good Idea, But It Won't Replace The Light Bulb

All this open forum business can pinch every now and then.

Decisions that satisfy everyone don't always happen any easier than they did the other way.

Communication sometimes gets filtered by the person who carries the message.

The Cabinet Has To Be Kept In Its Place

It serves best as a forum for ideas and least as a policy forming body.

Agendas before the meetings and minutes after the meetings are a must.

If you can't resolve it in a Cabinet meeting take it to all the faculty.

The principal is still in charge of making policy decisions in the building.

All This Shared Decision Making Can Be A Drag

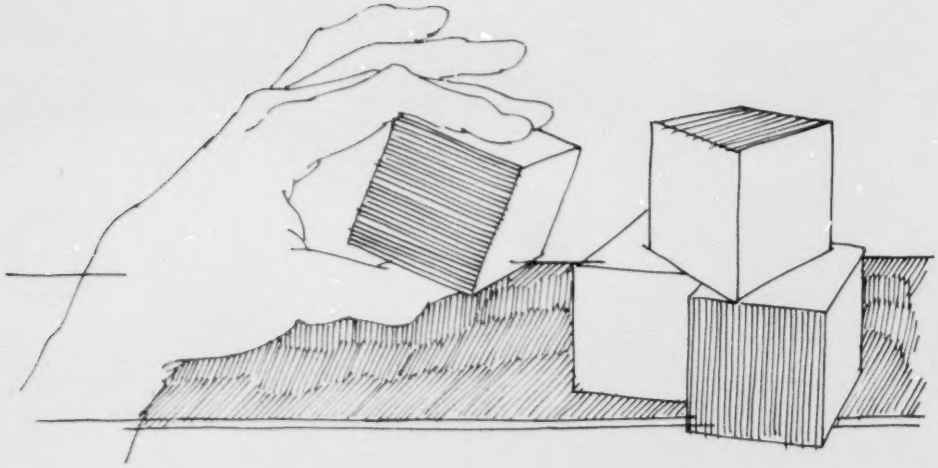
It's a lot of work keeping things going.

Nerves get a little frayed every so often.

Seems like we're always wanting to do something a little differently.

It may make sense for us to do some of the work that used to be done for us, but it doesn't make it any easier.

It takes some getting used to before it becomes useful.



Block Schedules Really Let Us Individualize Our Program

Our students have study hall when we have our preparation periods.

We can have the students come to the team room when we feel they need our help.

It is a good time to work on projects.

The students can look us up when they want some extra help.

It really takes the pressure off during our regular class meetings.

We are more available to students when they want or need our help.

Block Scheduling Loads Up Your Work For Half The Day, But It Doesn't Let Off The Other Half Either

Class sizes are a little larger with fewer classes.

You can't get into your class room if you want to set up a display or something.

Teaching all of your classes in a row can make you a little weary.

Then there is study hall, team meeting and all those kids who want your help, plus the ones you want to see. Wow, the day goes fast.

There Are Some Limitations To Teaming In A Junior High School

Team planning has to be incorporated into the school day.

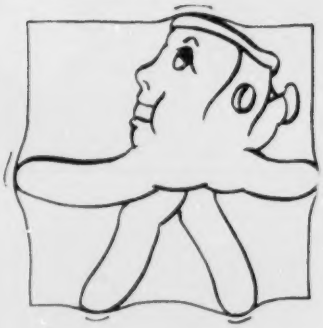
After school activities draw some teachers away

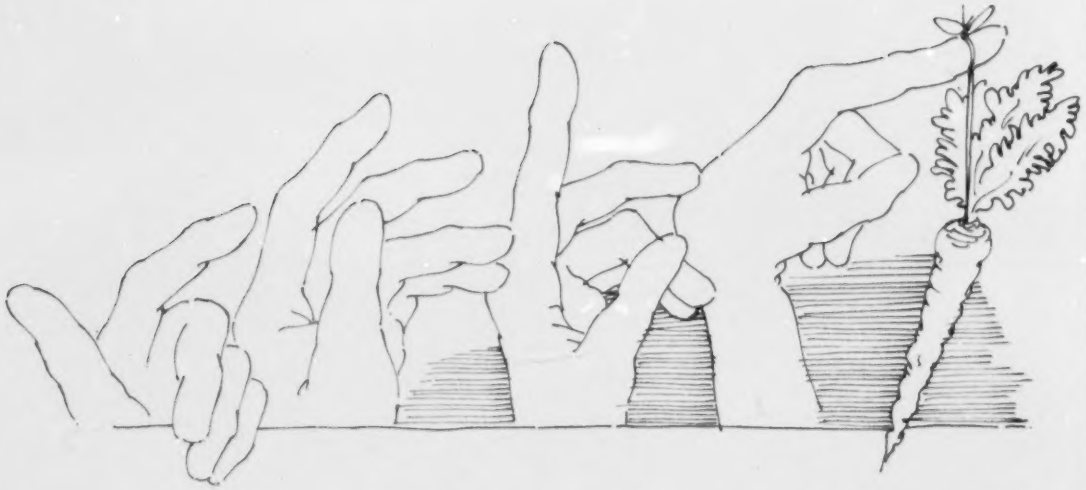
The school day is too long and intense to expect productive effort after school on a regular basis.

The more specialized the training of the teachers the more limited they are in the different things they can do.

Having teachers with general background would seem to provide more flexibility in assigning teachers to teams and in providing instructional options within a team.

We are pretty firmly committed to teachers with specialized training and we work the best we can within that limitation.





Goal Setting Gave Us Something To Shoot For

Without it we might have gone off on our separate ways.

We got a perspective of the whole school program.

It involved the non-team staff members, too.

Now, we have a way of deciding what is needed.

Eventually The Curriculum Will Need A Careful Review

Not that any curriculum is automatically inadequate.

There will always be something that could be improved.

Once you start changing things around
-and asking yourself why
-and then setting goals
-you are going to end up reviewing your curriculum.

We Took Advantage Of Teaming To Produce Interdisciplinary Curriculum Units

Basic skills and self-awareness are our main concerns for our students.

Some of the work was done during the school year, but most of it was done during three summers.

It was hard and we had to revise most of it.

There is a pamphlet that describes what we did.
(Interdisciplinary Instruction in a Junior High School)

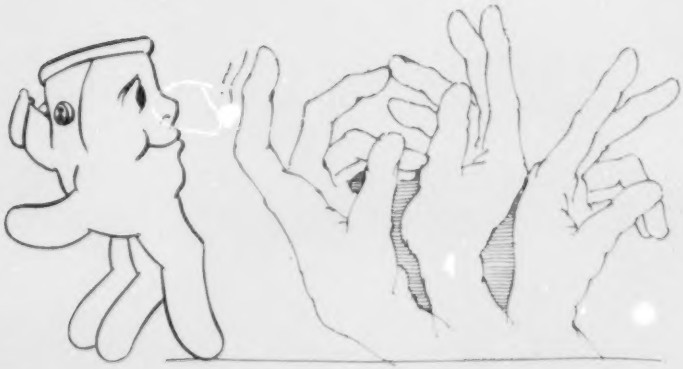
For Us, Teaming Is More Than Just Organizational

All this effort should have a pay off with students.

It's easy to forget that scheduling, grouping, conferring, and all those teacher things are done to make a better education for students.

The pay off takes planning and commitment on our part.

But we had to have support from the administration, too.



So You Want To Team Teach In A Junior High

We did and we are glad we did.

We can do a lot more than we used to do.

We are a lot more aware of what's going on.

Our students are getting a better deal.

For further information contact:

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Printed by
Oregon Senior High School
Graphic Arts Classes